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DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN TURKMEN SSR

Turkmenskaya Iskra  
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[The following presents information from a summary of the report by S. Babayev, Secretary, Central Committee of the Communist Party Turkmen SSR, to the Eighth Plenum of the committee, in session on 10-11 October 1953, pursuant to the decree of the September 1953 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On Measures for the Further Development of Agriculture in the USSR."

While there have been successes in the development of agriculture in the republic during the postwar years, all the shortcomings pointed out at the September Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU apply to the republic. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan, the Council of Ministers Turkmen SSR, and party, state, and agricultural organs of the republic still occupy themselves too little with agricultural problems.

Successes in the development of cotton growing, the principal branch of agriculture in the republic, have been considerable. During the postwar years, the area sown to cotton in the republic has increased 36 percent and the yield has risen 44 percent, with a twofold production increase.

However, some rayons (Takhta-Bazarskiy, Farabskiy, Kaganovichskiy, Andreyevskiy, Leniniskiy, Tel'manskiy, and Kunya-Urgenchskiy) have not yet fulfilled their state-assigned tasks for the development of cotton growing. There are still many lagging, low-yield kolkhozes.

Secretary Khrushchev's indictment of serious lagging in the cotton growing in Tashkent Oblast should cause the party organization of that oblast to remedy the situation.

The principal reason for serious shortcomings in the development of cotton growing is unsatisfactory performance of agrotechniques in growing the crop such as failure to plow winter fallow, late sowing, inadequate cultivation, improper irrigation during the growing period, late supplemental fertilization, ineffective combating of pests and diseases, and insufficient application of organic fertilizers to the fields.

The increase in the gross cotton harvest planned for 1954-1955 is to be realized through yield and sown-area increases and an almost twofold increase in labor productivity.

A serious basic planning error on the part of oblast and rayon party, state, and agricultural organs is the manner in which sown areas for cotton and other crops are assigned to rayons and kolkhozes. In most rayons, the practice is well established to assign smaller sown area plans to high-yield kolkhozes and larger area plans to low-yield kolkhozes. The result is that the labor force of low-yield kolkhozes bears an extraordinarily heavy load and cannot cope with the agrotechniques of growing the crops. Thus, in 1952, a group of kolkhozes with yields of up to 16 quintals per hectare carried a load of 2.45 hectares of sown area, including 1.5 hectares of cotton, per able-bodied worker; kolkhozes with yields in excess of 25 quintals per hectare had a load of only 1.52 hectares of total sown area, including 1.0 hectare of cotton, per able-bodied worker.

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Shortcomings pointed out at the September Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU in the animal-husbandry division of agriculture also apply in the republic.

Although the number of collectivized livestock has been increasing, yields have been low; milk yields have been intolerably low.

The rate of animal reproduction has also been unsatisfactory; the breeding of cattle for milk production is the most backward branch of animal husbandry, especially in Tashauzskaya and Chardzhouskaya oblasts. Plans for breeding cows remain unfulfilled and the relative proportion of cows to other cattle is low, which further results in a decreased animal birth rate.

Milk yields, which have been unsatisfactory in the republic for a number of years, have averaged 350 liters of milk per foraging cow; in Tashauzskaya Oblast, an average of only 185 liters was obtained, while the plan called for 700 liters. In some regions, cows give no more milk than goats.

Inadequate feeding of cows and a poor fodder base are the reasons for the present status of animal husbandry. Fodder procurement based on volume results in the accumulation of coarse and low-nutritive fodder; meanwhile the plan for the procurement of alfalfa is fulfilled only 60-65 percent. High milk yields are impossible without succulent fodder. In order to increase milk production, the proportion of cows should be raised to 40 cows per 100 head of cattle.

The construction of suitable animal shelters and the additional mechanization of labor-consuming operations are necessary for the further development of animal husbandry.

Sheep raising is important to the economy of the Turkmen SSR. The number of sheep in kolkhozes of the republic more than doubled during the last 12 years. Many rayons surpass their quotas and the republic boasts of hundreds of specialists in collectivized sheep raising, yet serious shortcomings persist. There is still considerable barrenness among sheep and goats, and the number of females in such herds is still low.

Many kolkhozes are negligent in developing sheep raising, especially in Tashauzskaya Oblast, where every index is lower than the republic average.

Serious inadequacies exist in the care and feeding of sheep. Inadequate construction of shelters for sheep and insufficient mechanization of labor-consuming operations are obstacles to sheep breeding.

Production of vegetables, potatoes, and cucurbit crops is very unsatisfactory in the republic. Sowing plans are not fulfilled and yields are low. Production of grain and oleaginous crops and the state of horticulture and viticulture are also very unsatisfactory.

Water resources are important for further development of agriculture in the republic, but in recent years water-resource-development and land-improvement plans have not been fulfilled.

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Work directed toward returning agricultural specialists to kolkhozes and MTS is progressing slowly. In the system of the Ministry of Agriculture and Procurement Turkmen SSR, there are 968 agronomists and zootechnicians. Of these, only 324 serve in kolkhozes; the rest work in the apparatuses of agricultural organs, from the rayon administrations of agriculture and procurement up to the ministry itself.

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